

INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION
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SUMMARY OF REPLIES TO RECENT SELECTED MIS INQUIRIES

What topics have been of interest to MIS subscribers and how has MIS replied to inquiries on these topics?

Management Information Service is now in its ninth year. Besides preparing monthly reports on timely subjects, MIS answers 50 to 60 inquiries a month from over 800 subscribers. Answers point out trends, give examples of good practice, suggest possible courses of action, recommend references, and frequently include the loan of books, pamphlets, and other materials from the MIS library. This report summarizes replies to some of the inquiries in which particular interest has been shown during the past year. The summarized subjects are:

- Controlling Sick Leave
- Functions of Motorized Police Patrolmen
- Service Awards for Employees
- Alternative Methods of Garbage Disposal
- Governmental Responsibility for Special Services

Controlling Sick Leave

Sick leave is an administrative provision for time off with pay during illness. It is commonly expressed as a specified number of days earned for a certain period of service, such as a day a month or ten days a year. The leave each employee accumulates is insurance that his pay will continue uninterrupted even though he is unable to be at work. Sick leave is widely accepted as a privilege and its use is limited to bona fide illness of employees or members of their immediate families. Use for other personal reasons is sometimes condoned, but few cities consider the time earned as a right to be used without restriction. In Detroit in 1949, for example, the city strongly rejected claims of the United Public Workers of America that employees were entitled to use accrued sick time in any way they saw fit and that the city had no jurisdiction over its use.

Effective control of sick leave is a widespread and perennial problem. Occasionally, rewards for non-use, such as extra vacation or terminal pay, are suggested as means of encouraging employees to let their leave accumulate, but neither government nor industry make use of such incentives to any appreciable extent. Their actual effect is to benefit the healthy employee at the expense of those required to take time off for illness. Terminal pay, in addition, would add significantly to personnel costs.

City experience varies considerably in the extent to which sick leave is used. Pueblo, Colo., had a 1953 rate of 1.9 per cent of scheduled working time or about 5.8 days per year. Kansas City, Mo., employees used an average of 5.35 days in 1950 and 1951, while those in San Diego took 2.95 days in 1950, 4.54 in 1951 and 4.95 in 1952 against authorized time of 15 days a year. Total time lost for sickness averages much less than the time usually authorized, but sick leave is used fairly infrequently for extended illnesses and more often for absences of one or two days as the time is accrued. These absences may recur among a fairly small number of employees and

considerable savings may result from curtailing them. A good sick leave report and good supervision are the bases of control. San Diego found that a firm policy of record-keeping and supervision reduced sick days from over nine in 1946 to under three in 1950, with an estimated saving of \$180,000 per year.

A monthly sick leave report should show the following for each department:
(a) number of employees sick for each of a given number of days (e.g. 1, 2, 3, and 4 or more); (b) total days lost; (c) total number of employees sick; (d) average number of days absent per absentee; (e) cumulative average to date. This report will indicate the pattern in which sick leave is being taken and, together with individual employee records showing frequency of individual absences, give the facts needed for tighter administrative control.

A good sick leave rule need require only "competent proof of illness." This can mean anything from taking an employee at his word to visiting him at home to establish the facts regarding his illness. Frank discussion of an employee's record and health may be enough to clear up misunderstandings or discourage malingering. A doctor's certificate is virtually worthless because it is too easy to obtain and the doctor has no stake in the employee's job or need for being at work. Remedial action may be accomplished by straightforward conferences--suggesting the advisability of a physical check-up, advising that further absences will be subject to scrutiny and possible denial of sick leave credit, or asking an employee himself to suggest how his record might be improved. When an individual knows he has been missed, he may make a stronger effort to be on hand. Expecting and appreciating his presence may help.

Functions of Motorized Patrolmen

The best present concept of the motorized police patrolman is that he uses his vehicle for rapid transportation from place to place and to some extent for protection against the elements, but that a considerable part of his time is spent in actual foot patrol. The combination enables an officer to maintain a close firsthand check of conditions on his beat; to become acquainted with the people who live in his district and with those who frequent it; to cruise in the area at random so as to make his presence apparent but unscheduled; to be in constant communication with headquarters; to change his current location freely and quickly in response to radio dispatches; and to support other patrolmen or be supported with minimum delay.

O. W. Wilson, in "Put the Cop Back on the Beat" (Public Management, June, 1953) points out that the cost of operating a patrol car on one tour of duty is between 15 and 20 per cent of a patrolman's daily wage, while using vehicles for transport increases the effectiveness of patrol by several hundred per cent. Motorized officers make several times as many arrests as men on foot and deal with nearly all the incidents that call for police service on the foot patrolman's beat. This greater effectiveness together with the mobility, speed, surprise, and constant communication with headquarters available in radio-equipped cars enables a given precinct to be staffed with fewer men than the same precinct with all foot patrol.

The police department in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, has used three-wheel motorcycles since January 1951 to supplement patrol cars on all shifts. Equipped with three-way radio, one of these vehicles is assigned to the central business district and another to two outlying small business sections after the meter enforcement patrol is finished each day. The three-wheelers are used only as conveyances to get from one place to another. The saving in time has enabled two men to do the work that formerly took five, allowing greater flexibility in patrol assignments. In the first year of operation the burglary rate in areas patrolled by three-wheelers was reduced 49 per cent. Appreciable reductions were also made in 1952 and 1953.

Three-wheelers in Eau Claire are more versatile than automobiles, especially in central business areas. Officers can go virtually any place a man can walk, and are encouraged to do so. They require no more protection than a foot patrolman, can cover distances in a fraction of the time, are more obviously and continuously in public view over a wider area, and are in constant contact with headquarters and other patrol vehicles by radio. These officers are required to "shake front and back doors" and interrogate loiterers and occupants of suspicious cars the same as if they were on foot. After securing their beats in this way, they cruise in a "systematically unsystematic" pattern noting hazardous running traffic violations and apprehending the offenders. They are also frequently dispatched to investigate accidents.

In his book Police Planning (Springfield, Illinois, Charles C. Thomas, 1952. p. 7.75) O. W. Wilson says, "The patrolman who spends all his time driving neglects his duty to make inspections, to observe, to make himself available for public service, and to make contacts with citizens." In good practice the motorized patrolman makes inspections on foot within range of his radio as described above for Eau Claire or reports out of service if required to travel out of range. A warning device actuated from headquarters may turn on his flasher light or sound the siren, recalling him to the car in special emergencies.

The telephone call box is a necessary supplement to motorized radio patrol and the patrolman should call in regularly whether walking or driving his beat. When the officer makes a routine time-call, the callbox definitely establishes his location, a feature still lacking in radio communication. It permits detailed and lengthy conversations when these are necessary, gives greater secrecy, and allows officers to telephone reports to headquarters for sound-recording by equipment attached to the phone, as in Berkeley, Calif., Eau Claire, and other cities.

Service Awards To Employees

Positive, public recognition of employees for continuous faithful service is a good way to promote morale and encourage longer tenure. It also affords an opportunity to give the voting public a favorable impression of the competence, loyalty, and devotion of city employees. Local newspapers will generally be glad to feature service recognition programs and the human interest stories behind them.

Public ceremonies acknowledging employee tenure are held in such cities as Alhambra, San Jose, San Diego, and Santa Monica, Calif.; Pontiac and Port Huron, Mich.; and University City, Mo. For its first recognition night Santa Monica invited 1,000 friends and relatives of employees with long service to a ceremony at the municipal auditorium. A state assemblyman was master of ceremonies, the city manager gave the keynote address, and members of the city council presented service awards--pins depicting the city seal and years of service, 20-year pins being set with an emerald, 25-year pins with a ruby, and 30-year pins with a diamond. Five, ten, and fifteen-year pins were of the same design without stones.

In Alhambra the city employees' association and the city government cooperate on an annual awards banquet at which pins are awarded for each five years of service and upon retirement. Framed parchment certificates are also presented to retiring employees. The employees' association takes care of all details of the banquet except awards, which are provided by the city. New officers are installed on this occasion. In one recent year the city manager installed the officers while the mayor, assisted by members of the city council, presented the pins and certificates.

Positive recognition of employee tenure should be normal to any good personnel program. It may be superficial, however, and unappreciated, unless accompanied by other definite aspects of good personnel administration such as position classification

and pay plans, advancement based on merit, good supervision, retirement and insurance benefits and good working conditions and equipment. Civil Service Assembly has a report on service award programs in Personnel Brief for June, 1953 (1313 East 60 Street, Chicago. \$2.)

Alternative Methods of Garbage Disposal

Sanitary Landfill. Sanitary landfill is still the lowest cost and best means of complete refuse disposal for the small community with land available. A recent special report suggests that until the distance to a satisfactory fill site exceeds 10 miles, the cost of transportation will generally not justify consideration of alternatives to sanitary landfill such as incineration. This report, "Refuse Collection and Disposal for the Small Community," a joint project of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the American Public Works Association (Chicago, 1313 East 60 Street, 1953. \$2.), discusses preparation and collection of refuse, disposal methods, and financing. It also contains charts and illustrations such as those showing the amount of equipment required for various standards of collection service, and those depicting the steps in the landfill process.

The Sanitary Engineering Research Project of the University of California conducted intensive studies of this refuse disposal method in 1950 and 1951. Its findings are reported in "An Analysis of Refuse Collection and Sanitary Landfill Disposal" (Richmond, California, 1952. \$1.50). This study includes observations on average amounts of refuse collected in 13 cities, collection time in man hours for various types of service, operation and maintenance costs of garbage trucks, sanitary landfill operating costs, including land and equipment requirements, and over-all costs of administering a refuse collection and disposal program.

Hog Feeding. With state legislation prohibiting the use of raw garbage as swine feed and thus drastically curtailing profitable use of this method of garbage disposal, a number of cities have abandoned hog feeding in favor of sanitary landfill, incineration, and other disposal methods. The alternative is to cook the garbage with equipment that requires considerable capital outlay. Cities that expect to continue feeding garbage to hogs can be guided by two publications, "Swine Feeding Method of Garbage Disposal," published jointly by the American Public Works Association and American Municipal Association (Chicago, 1313 East 60 Street, 1953. \$1), and "Equipment for Heat-Treatment of Garbage to be Used for Hog Feed," issued jointly by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U. S. Public Health Service (Washington, 1952).

Grinding. Installation of household garbage grinders received a flurry of popularity following a city-wide installation in Jasper, Indiana, in 1950. In 1952 the U. S. Public Health Service published a booklet on the Jasper experience entitled "Community-Wide Installation of Household Garbage Grinders" (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 20 cents). This booklet makes a "before and after" comparison for comparable three-month periods in 1950 and 1951 of such factors as water consumption, raw sewage characteristics, refuse collection, and rodent infestation. Other semi-technical articles on the effect of ground garbage on sewers and treatment plants have appeared in the Journal of the American Water Works Association and other periodicals.

Household grinders are convenient for the homeowner although they do not solve the entire problem of rubbish collection. Installed in quantity they also add considerably to the load of the sewage treatment plant. Cities planning sewage treatment facilities should take into account the probable extent to which household grinders will be used. Those with existing sewage treatment facilities need to determine whether the present plant can handle an increase in ground garbage or whether household grinders must be prohibited as they have been in some communities such as

Philadelphia. If household installations are authorized they should be allowed only on permit so that the city knows the location and number of grinders.

Central grinding is used in such cities as Lansing, Michigan, St. Louis, and Baltimore. This method requires considerable capital expense for the grinding plant, an adequate sewage treatment capacity, and facilities for segregating rubbish and salvage materials from the garbage to be ground.

Incineration. Incineration of municipal refuse requires an expensive plant with constant technical supervision to maintain it at peak performance. It is economically more feasible for large than small cities, or for smaller ones in a metropolitan area that can pool their money and resources. For example, nine cities in Oakland County, Michigan, have formed a joint authority to build an incinerator in a central location, large enough to handle the refuse from all nine communities.

The Sanitary Engineering Research Project has two booklets entitled "Municipal Incineration," (Richmond, Calif., 1951) one dealing with field studies conducted in 1950, and the other with factors involved in municipal incineration. Some of these factors are characteristics of refuse, utilization of waste heat, construction features of buildings, ash removal and disposal, plant operation, costs and financing. The field studies were made on three municipally owned and operated incinerators in California. Conclusions from the field study deal with use of waste heat, auxiliary fuel requirements, stack discharges (air pollution), and incinerator operations. Both monographs can be obtained from the University of California in Richmond.

Composting. Interest in composting has revived in recent years and has been the subject of several commercial ventures and experimental studies. Composting has long been used successfully in cities throughout the world except in the United States where until recently it had not been considered feasible as a municipal function. Finished compost is recognized as an excellent soil conditioner. Interest in its commercial possibilities as well as in restoring worn-out soil has revived interest in the method.

The Sanitary Engineering Research Project at the University of California recently completed experimental studies which demonstrated some possibilities of composting. Its report, based on intensive laboratory findings and on field studies in Berkeley, Calif., is entitled "Reclamation of Municipal Refuse by Composting" (Richmond, Calif., 1953. \$1.) Garbage exactly as it came from homes and businesses was ground uniformly and put in windrows after rags, bottles and other salvage had been removed. Windrows were turned regularly to encourage bacterial action on the entire mass. Evidence from these experiments showed that refuse can be composted in the open in dry climates, so that large investments in plant and equipment may be unnecessary, except for a grinding unit; that normal composting takes 12 to 21 days, produces no flies or offensive odors, and is self-executing without additional chemicals or other substances. They also showed that municipal refuse composts readily with sewage sludge and cannery wastes. The conclusions disagree in some respects with statements in "Refuse Collection and Disposal for the Small Community," the report of U. S. Public Health Service and American Public Works Association cited above. For example, the latter states that not more than 40 per cent of municipal refuse can be composted, whereas the California study indicated that 66 per cent of the refuse in Berkeley and other California cities was compostable.

Tacoma, Washington, conducted successful composting experiments in 1953. The process developed consists of windrowing the raw garbage directly from the trucks, turning it twice a week with bulldozers, and at the end of eight weeks putting the whole mass of material through a quarter-inch vibrating screen to remove undigested material. All organic waste including paper is composted, only such items as glass,

cans and rags remaining to be salvaged. This method takes three to four times as long as the California plan, but it eliminates both a grinding plant and initial segregation of salvage materials which are automatically removed in the screening process.

Michigan State College and the city of East Lansing have been conducting experiments with a composting "silo" - a funnel-shaped stack into which raw garbage is fed by an endless conveyor. Initial data indicate the process takes only two to three days to produce the finished product. These experiments and the limited success of several private firms in producing commercial soil conditioners by composting, suggest this method of refuse disposal may ultimately be practical in U. S. cities. One unanswered question is the marketability of the finished product whether "raw" as a soil conditioner or "enriched" as a fertilizer.

Governmental Responsibility for Special Services

Questions frequently arise over the extent to which a city government should provide special services for individuals in the community. Examples of such services are fire guards at public gatherings, funeral escorts, protection for bank messengers, or maintenance of private streets. Nearly every city provides one or more of these or related services for theaters, banks, and other special groups, but if they are provided extensively they may undermine the effectiveness of regular functions and add significantly to the cost of government without benefiting those who pay for it.

There is general agreement among administrative officials that governments should provide only those services that carry a general benefit. However, where the tradition of special treatment is strong or the demand for exceptional services urgent the city may find it difficult to resist. It then may be argued that it is feasible to continue or to provide special services by charging for them on special schedules which relieve the general tax structure.

Administrative costs of levying and collecting these special charges will very likely be out of proportion to the revenue derived. Availability of personnel to perform city jobs may also be a factor, particularly when regular services are being expanded and there is a tight labor market. In view of these considerations and the absence of general benefit, city governments would be well advised to resist and curtail special services.